

Tendinitis



What is a tendon?

A Tendon is a thick fibrous cord that attaches muscle to bone.

TENDINITIS: inflammation or irritation of a tendon or the tendon sheath (covering for the tendon)

Causes:

- Overuse
- Aging (tendon loses elasticity)
- Poor technique in sports
- Repetitive movement (repeated trauma)
- Falling, lifting, or carrying heavy objects



Common sites of involvement along with their signs and symptoms:

I. Elbow (Lateral Epicondylitis or "tennis elbow")

- Aching pain over the lateral side (outside) of the elbow after activity ceases
- Later stages will produce sharp pain during activity and during simple activities such as lifting a coffee mug or carrying a heavy book
- Point tenderness over the lateral side of the elbow (lateral epicondyle)
- Pain increases with active wrist extension, supination, and radial deviation of the wrist



II. Knee (Patellar tendinitis)

- Initial pain after activity is concentrated just below the knee cap
- Pain in the knee is present at the start of activity, subsides with warm-up, then reappears after activity
- Pain is present while ascending and descending stairs



III. Shoulder (Rotator Cuff tendinitis)

- Pain and clicking in shoulder
- Pain is often worse at night and may prevent sleep
- Constant pain or pain with motion of the shoulder. Pain is worse with overhead activities and arm extension (such as reaching in the back seat of a car)
- Decrease in mobility (range of motion) in the shoulder
- Can lead to shoulder impingement



IV. Achilles (Achilles tendinitis)

- Pain on tendon during exercise or activity
- Swelling over the achilles tendon
- Redness over skin
- Can feel a creaking when you press your fingers into the tendon and move the foot
- Pain and stiffness in the tendon in the morning
- Pain in tendon when walking (especially uphill or upstairs)



Treatment

- The goal of treatment is to relieve pain and reduce inflammation
- Pain relievers (anti-inflammatory medications) or steroid injections
- Massage
- Strengthening exercises to improve tendon use
- Ultrasound and/or electrical stimulation for pain control
- Cryotherapy (using cold treatments such as ice)
- Surgery- this is used only for severe tendinitis that is not healing from other treatment



At Home Treatment = PRICE

Protection - immobilize the affected area to encourage healing and to protect it from further injury. You may need to use elastic wraps, slings, splints, crutches or canes

Rest - avoid activities that increase the pain or swelling. Rest is essential to tissue healing but it doesn't mean complete bed rest

Ice - to decrease pain, muscle spasm and swelling, apply ice to the injured area. Ice packs, ice massage or slush baths can help

Compression - because swelling can result in loss of motion in an injured joint, compress the area until swelling has ceased. Wraps or compressive (Ace) bandages are best

Elevation - to reduce swelling, raise the affected leg above the level of your heart

Prevention

- If there is pain with one exercise, rest
- If one exercise or activity causes you particular pain, persistent pain, try a different exercise
- Stretching before exercise is important
- Proper ergonomics (fitting work space to body)
- Warm-up before exercise and cool down after exercise
- Strengthening exercises

Complications

- Tendinitis may become chronic or long term, and can lead to the rupture of a tendon. Tendinitis can also cause permanent damage to the tissue that makes up a tendon. Although rest a key part to treating tendinitis, prolonged inactivity can cause stiffness or even cause joints to freeze up (frozen shoulder).



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